

Statues on the move at Thai airport

12 large statues of demon spirits are being moved to new positions in Thailand's main international airport. But it's not clear if the reason lies in aesthetics or superstition. From Bangkok, our Southeast Asia correspondent Rachel Harvey reports:

You would have thought it **hard to miss** one six metre high, **scowling** demon, **let alone** 12. But the authorities at Bangkok's main airport say they're **relocating** their spirit statues to the check-in area, where they're thought more likely to be noticed and appreciated by passengers.

Local media are reporting the real reason for the move is that airport staff had come to believe the figures, collectively worth almost a million dollars, had brought them bad luck. Last year the airport was **blockaded** for eight days by political protestors, **resulting in a big loss in earnings**.

But moving the statues is **not a matter to be taken lightly**. Buddhists believe the **demons to be symbols** of anger, strength and power. Some **astrologers** are warning that **shifting them to a new location** might bring more bad luck and have suggested a safer option might be simply to turn them around to face a different direction.

Rachel Harvey, BBC News, Bangkok

Vocabulary and definitions

hard to miss	difficult not to notice, not to see
scowling	frowning, showing on your face that you are unhappy or annoyed by something
let alone	used after a negative statement (here, hard to miss one statue) to emphasise how unlikely another situation (here, miss 12 statues)
relocating	moving to another place or location
blockaded	when a country or place (here, the airport) is surrounded by soldiers (or here, protesters) to stop something (here, planes) going in or out
resulting in a big loss in earnings	making a lot of businesses lose money or be unprofitable
not a matter to be taken lightly	something that should be thought about very seriously
demons to be symbols	spirits (often evil or bad ones) are signs
astrologers	people who believe that the movement of the stars at our birth and at other times influences how we behave and what happens to us
shifting them to a new location	moving them to another place

More on this story: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7590409.stm>

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http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/wordsinthenews/2009/11/091111_witn_thailand.shtml

